

COVID-19 (coronavirus) Information

The information regarding the COVID-19 (coronavirus) is evolving and you can expect guidance from the Centers for Disease Control CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) will be updated as these agencies receive new information.

It is important to get you information from reliable sources and the links to CDC and DPH are provided as part of this message; visiting these sites will keep you informed and will provide you with the most up to date information on the situation.

The CDC has called on individuals, businesses, schools and governments to consider steps they can take to better prepare themselves, their employees and the citizens for potential disruptions which could occur in the event that cases of COVID-19 increase.

Individuals should follow the prevention actions listed below, excerpted from the CDC website as of 2/25/2020, to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- *Avoid close contact with people who are sick.*
- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.*
- *Stay home when you are sick.*
- *Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.*
- *Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.*
- *Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.*
 - *CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.*
 - *Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).*
- *Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.*
 - *If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.*

There has been public inquiry about the use of masks or respirators and currently the CDC and DPH don't recommend the widespread use of masks or respirators. Listed below is the recommendation from the DPH.

Should I wear a respirator in public?

CDC does not recommend the routine use of respirators outside of workplace settings (in the community). Most often, spread of respiratory viruses from person-to-person happens among close contacts (within 6 feet). CDC recommends everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, such as avoiding people who are sick, avoiding touching your eyes or nose, and covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue. People who are sick should stay home and not go into crowded public places or visit people in hospitals. Workers who are sick should follow CDC guidelines and stay home when they are sick.

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov#-printable-fact-sheets->

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

We at the Health Department are available to speak to citizens regarding questions they may have and help them find answers to their questions.